



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
United States Patent and Trademark Office
Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450
www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
-----------------	-------------	----------------------	---------------------	------------------

10/747,632

12/29/2003

Sudhir Diddee

M61.12-0573

5735

27366

7590

04/30/2008

WESTMAN CHAMPLIN (MICROSOFT CORPORATION)

SUITE 1400

900 SECOND AVENUE SOUTH

MINNEAPOLIS, MN 55402-3319

EXAMINER

MANSFIELD, THOMAS L

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

3623

MAIL DATE

DELIVERY MODE

04/30/2008

PAPER

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary	Application No. 10/747,632	Applicant(s) DIDDEE ET AL.	
	Examiner THOMAS MANSFIELD	Art Unit 3623	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 29 December 2003.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-31 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-31 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 29 December 2003 is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☒ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 3) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application |
| Paper No(s)/Mail Date <u>27 May 2005</u> . | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

Status of Claims

1. This First Office action is in reply to the Application filed on 29 December 2003.
2. Claims 1-31 are currently pending and have been examined.

Claim Objections

3. Claim 19 is objected to because of the following informalities: Claim 19 recites, "*a predefined application*". Claim 2 recites "*a pre-identified application*". The Examiner interprets, "*predefined*" in Claim 19 as a mis-spelling of "*pre-identified*" of Claim 2. For examination purposes, the Examiner will interpret "*predefined*" as "*pre-identified*". Appropriate correction is required.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

4. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(e) the invention was described in (1) an application for patent, published under section 122(b), by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent or (2) a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a) shall have the effects for purposes of this subsection of an application filed in the United States only if the international application designated the United States and was published under Article 21(2) of such treaty in the English language.
5. Claims 1-12 and 15-31 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Gusick et al (Gusick) (U.S. Pub. No. 2001/0047270).

With regard to Claims 1, 15, and 26, Gusick teaches *a method, query service provider (customer service system), and computer-readable medium (software) for collecting information (adding customer service information) from a user of a computer network (customer service network) (see at least paragraphs 0012-0013), the method comprising:*

- *providing over the computer network (customer service network **170**) a dynamic query (knowledge database **120**, natural language query, Artificial Intelligence interpretation) for structured responses (general question and answer combinations, FAQs) by the user (see at least paragraphs 0030-0048).*
- *receiving the structured responses from the user (receive customer questions about products) (see at least paragraph 0031).*
- *generating an electronic message to a recipient indicating that the structured responses have been received, and including the structured responses (listen to the query and answer it, preferable by submitting a typed e-mail response) (see at least paragraph 0057).*

With regard to Claims 2, 19, and 27, Gusick teaches *automatically integrating the structured responses into a pre-identified application (query is compared against that segment of the knowledge database **120** that is relevant to the party or organization **160**) (see at least paragraph 0048).*

With regard to Claim 3, Gusick teaches:

- *receiving a contact indication from the user (provide the representative of the first party with a contact list comprising contact information) (see at least paragraph 0015).*
- *providing the dynamic query to the user in response to the contact indication (provide a response to the query) (see at least paragraph 0015).*

With regard to Claim 4, Gusick teaches *providing content over the computer network for display to the user* (display of FAQs) (see at least paragraph 0035).

With regard to Claims 5 and 16, Gusick teaches *providing a contact link* (organization 160 hosting the link from which the customer accessed customer service system **100**) *in the content* (provide the representative of the first party with a contact list comprising contact information) (see at least paragraphs 0015 and 0051).

With regard to Claim 6 and 17, Gusick teaches *receiving an indication that the user has activated the contact link* (Tracking mechanisms are again preferably used to keep the dispatcher abreast of the answer process) (see at least paragraphs 0073-0076).

With regard to Claim 18, Gusick teaches wherein the query service component is configured to provide the message as an electronic mail message (the answer is routed to the customer, preferable to the return e-mail address specified by the customer) and the user responses as an attachment to the electronic mail message (automatically attached to the e-mail message) (see at least paragraphs 0060 and 0075).

With regard to Claims 7, 20, and 28, Gusick teaches:

- *providing a query form to a recipient* (completes a standard response procedure, greeting, salutation) (see at least paragraph 0060).
- *receiving query configuration data from the recipient, on the query form, indicative of a configuration of the query* (clicks a submit button to send the reply, edit the answer, and/or add any appropriate annotations at step **545**, before submitting the answer to the customer) (see at least paragraphs 0060-0063).

With regard to Claims 8 and 21, Gusick teaches *receiving query definition data on the query form indicative of a content of questions in the query* (receive a question relating to a product of the specific supplier) (see at least paragraph 0068).

With regard to Claims 9 and 22, Gusick teaches *receiving form data on the query form indicative of non-content* (consumer magazines/reports, product reviews, links) configuration of questions in the query (see at least paragraph 0041).

With regard to Claims 10, 23, and 29, Gusick teaches *receiving query branching data on the query form indicative of an order in which questions in the query are displayed to the user based on answers to the questions in the query* (FAQ area **310** is organized using a drill down topic hierarchy and lists a number of subtopics in connection, A Question can be associated with zero or more Answers, and an Answer can be associated with one or more Questions) (see at least paragraphs 0041, 0043, and 0105-0109).

With regard to Claims 11, 24, and 30, Gusick teaches *wherein the query branching data is configured to dynamically* (dynamic FAQ list) *change which questions are presented to the user based on the user's answers to previous questions in the query* ("drill-down" navigation scheme) (see at least paragraph 0040).

With regard to Claims 12, 25, and 31, Gusick teaches *providing a pre-configured query template for modification by the recipient* (may then modify/approve the answer and forward it to the customer who asked the question) (see at least paragraphs 0066 and 0077 and Figure 3).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

6. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:
- (a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.
7. Claims 13 and 14 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Gusick as applied to claims 1-12 above, and further in view of Galdes et al (Galdes) (U.S. 6,177,932).

With regard to Claim 13, Gusick teaches the method and system of Claims 1-12 above. Gusick does not specifically teach *generating a report based on the structured responses*. Galdes teaches *generating a report based on the structured responses* in analogous art of a network based customer service system for the purposes of, "A report generation unit 335 may be used to generate a report on a specific case" (see at least column 4, lines 16-23).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to combine the report generation unit as taught by Galdes with the customer service method of Gusick. One of ordinary skill in the art would have been motivated to do so for the benefit of an enhanced awareness of the number of questions answered by an advisor, the number of questions asked about any one location, or the percentage of customers who asked questions (Galdes, column 4, lines 16-23).

With regard to Claim 14, Gusick does not specifically teach *indicating how many times the query was submitted by a user*. Galdes teaches indicating how many times the query was submitted by a user in analogous art of a network based customer service system for the purposes of, "may include a history of previous questions from the same customer" (see at least column 4, lines 54-64).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to combine the report generation unit as taught by Galdes with the customer service method of Gusick. One of ordinary skill in the art would have been motivated to do so for the benefit improved interaction between the customer and the customer service system (Galdes, column 4, lines 54-64).

Conclusion

8. The following prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure:

- Nichols et al (U.S. Pub. No. 2003/0055652), discloses a private network exchange with multiple service providers, having a portal, collaborative applications, and a directory service.
- Fuerst (U.S. 6,189,029) discloses a web survey tool builder and result compiler.
- Cornelius et al (U.S. 7,069,234) discloses initiating an agreement in an e-commerce environment.
- Yang et al, "Enhancing the Effectiveness of Interactive Case-Based Reasoning with Clustering and Decision Forests", Applied Intelligence 14, 49-64, 2001, discloses CaseAdvisor, where during a retrieval process, an information-guided subsystem can generate decision forests based on users' current answers obtained through an interactive process.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to THOMAS MANSFIELD whose telephone number is (571)270-1904. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Thursday 8:30 am-6 pm, alt. Fridays.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Tariq Hafiz can be reached on 571-272-6729. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/T. M./
Examiner, Art Unit 3623

25 April 2008
Thomas Mansfield

/C. Michelle Tarae/
Primary Examiner, Art Unit 3623